

# One dies as violent clash erupts between NURTW factions in Abuja

By Victor Ahiuma-Young & Luminous Jannamike

**P**ARTS of Abuja, the nation's capital, were thrown into chaos yesterday as two factions of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, NURTW, clashed on Sapele Crescent, off Ladoke Akintola Boulevard in Garki II.

Gunshots were reported during the conflict, which heightened the tension in the area.

One person was reportedly killed, while several others sustained various degrees of injuries.

The conflict underlines the escalating tension within the NURTW requiring urgent intervention to prevent further breakdown of law and order.

According to sources, a clash broke out when supporters of NURTW president, Prof. Tajudeen Baruwa, marched towards the union's national headquarters, which is currently occupied by Lagos Park Management Committee, led by Tajudeen Agbede.

"As you may be aware, members

of the Lagos Park Management Committee, led by Agbede, forcibly occupied the secretariat a few weeks ago, displacing the president and other executives

"Therefore, supporters of the current president mobilized themselves in an effort to forcibly remove Agbede and his group.

"However, they were met by a police blockade which resulted in a violent confrontation. Shots were fired, intensifying the gravity of the crisis," an eyewitness disclosed to Vanguard.

Baruwa had been seeking intervention from the police and the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, to resolve the situation, without success.

"We shall henceforth not hesitate to defend our mandate with the last drop of our blood," Baruwa had earlier vowed, accusing former NURTW leaders of illegally occupying the national secretariat of the union.

He accused the former president of the union, Alhaji Najeem Yasin, and Agbede, the former national vice president, of holding illegal meetings with selected past leaders of the union.

In a further development, Baruwa alleged that the police seemed to favour the Lagos Park Management Committee.

He called on the Inspector General of Police, Olukayode Egbetokun, and Director General of Department of State Services, DSS, Yusuf Bichi, to intervene in the matter.

He added that only a court of competent jurisdiction could invalidate their mandate, and encouraged aggrieved members to follow due process and seek legal redress, warning that anything short of this could lead to anarchy.

On his part, the General Secretary of the Union, Anthony Asogwa told Vanguard that one union member was killed while several others sustained various degrees of injuries.

He said "Our members went to the National Secretariat to protest against the continued occupation by interlopers backed by the Police. Immediately they got there the stationed thugs and others starting shooting and attacking them with other dangerous weapons. At the end, one union member was killed and several others sustained various degrees of injuries and currently receiving treatment at different hospitals in Abuja."